House Murder Probe Witness

'Reliable' Cop Key King Informant

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WASHINGTON — Senior congressmen today said the man who offered information about an alleged police-FBI conspiracy to kill the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a former Louisville, Ky., policeman with a reputation for reliability.

The congressmen declined to identify the man for fear it might jeopardize his life but they said he served on the Louisville police force for 27 years and is now in the private security business.

The former policeman's charge may help the House Assassination Committee convince the House to extend its life. The committee's authority is due to expire at the end of the month.

The committee was formed to find evidence, if any, of conspiracies in either the King murder or the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Committee Chairman Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, said the former policeman's reputation was checked by Rep. Samuel L. Devine, Ohio, the panel's ranking minority member. Devine, a former FBI agent, checked with FBI sources.

Information of the alleged plot against Dr. King was turned over to the assassination committee by Rep. M. Gene Snyder, R-Ky., early this month. Snyder said he had received a letter from a former policeman who claimed he was twice offered $500,000 to kill the civil rights leader.

Snyder, a conservative, said he now will vote to extend the assassination committee's authority even though he voted against an extension last month.

Snyder, who lives in suburban Louisville, said the ex-policeman's letter named three FBI agents and "four or five" policemen as being involved in the alleged plot which informed sources said took place in the mid-1960s. Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis in April, 1968.

Snyder said the man has turned over to the House panel a tape recording made in an automobile of an alleged conversation with one of the plotters against Dr King.

James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to Dr. King's slaying and was sentenced to 99 years in jail. A recent Justice Department investigation concluded that Ray alone killed Dr. King.

Ray now claims he is innocent and is seeking a new trial.

Meanwhile, New Times magazine said yesterday in a copyrighted article that Ray's mysterious employer "Raoul" was really Ray's own brother, Jerry.